

**Application for Competitive Grants Under
Title VI, Subpart I, Section 6112:
Enhanced Assessment Instruments**

Application Deadline: June 3, 2005

Proficiency on State assessments required under Title I, Part A, of the ESEA is the primary indicator in the ESEA of student academic achievement and, hence, the primary measure of State success in meeting the goals of No Child Left Behind. In view of the critical importance of these State assessments, section 6111 provides formula grants to all SEAs, and section 6112 authorizes the Secretary to make competitive grant awards to State educational agencies (SEAs) to help them enhance the quality of assessment and accountability systems.

Purpose of Program: To enhance the quality of assessment instruments and systems used by States for measuring the achievement of all students.

Eligible Applicants: State Educational Agencies; Consortia of State Educational Agencies. An application from a consortium of SEAs must designate one SEA as the fiscal agent.

Estimated Available Funds: \$11,680,000 in FY 2005 funds.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$500,000 to \$2,000,000

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$1,460,000.

Estimated Number of Awards: 8

(Note: The Department is not bound by these estimates. However, in no case will an award be less than the amount specified in §6113(2)(A)(ii) based on the State's enrollment of students ages 5-17.)

Project period: Through February 28, 2007.

Statutory Reference: Public Law 107-110, The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, §§6112-6113.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, 97, 98, and 99.

Instructions: Because of the close relationship between this program and Part A of Title I, States that wish to apply for the competitive portion of the State assessment grants under the Enhanced Assessment Instruments Program must do so in the same manner that they apply for Part A funds—either both through the Consolidated Application or both through individual applications.

To apply for funds under this program, follow all instructions below, complete all items under the "Submission" section, and submit in time that materials are received by us no later than **June 3, 2005**. Since section 6112 is a competitive grant program, proposals will be reviewed by field readers and competed in the form in which they are received by the due date. Applicants will not have an additional opportunity to submit clarifications or amplifications or to respond to questions.

Electronic submissions are encouraged and must be submitted to zollie.stevenson@ed.gov. Please send a follow-up paper copy of the cover page signed by the authorized representative.

Paper submissions (original and 4 copies) must be mailed to the following address:

Zollie Stevenson, Jr.
Student Achievement & School Accountability Program
US Department of Education, Room 3W200
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-6132

Due to potential delays of mail through the U.S. Postal Service, applicants are encouraged to utilize alternative carriers for paper submissions.

Absolute Priorities

Section 6112(a) requires that all funded applications demonstrate that States (or consortia of States) will –

1. Collaborate with institutions of higher education, other research institutions, or other organizations to improve the quality, validity, and reliability of State academic assessments beyond the requirements for the assessments described in section 1111(b)(3) of Title I, Part A;
2. Measure student academic achievement using multiple measures of student academic achievement from multiple sources;
3. Chart student progress over time; or
4. Evaluate student academic achievement through the development of comprehensive academic assessment instruments, such as performance and technology-based academic assessments.

Competitive Preferences

Enhancing assessment instruments so that they take into consideration alternatives for assessing students with disabilities and limited English proficient students is one of the pressing needs in the area of large scale assessment. In addition, the complexity of improving assessments calls for collaborative efforts between and among states to yield approaches that can be adapted in varied contexts and for effective dissemination of results to increase the likelihood that the projects funded will contribute to ongoing State efforts to improve their assessment systems.

Toward those ends, the Secretary establishes the following competitive preferences and will award up to 35 points to an applicant based on how well its application meets the following preferences. These preference points will be in addition to points an applicant earns under the selection criteria.

1. Accommodations and alternate assessments. (15 points) Applications that can be expected to significantly advance practice in the area of increasing accessibility and validity of assessments of students with disabilities and/or limited English proficiency, including strategies for test design, administration with accommodations, scoring and reporting.

2. Collaborative efforts. (10 points) Applications that are sponsored by a consortium of States.
3. Dissemination. (10 points) Applications that include an effective plan for dissemination of results.

Submission

Electronic submissions are encouraged. An applicant that submits a paper application must submit one original and four copies of its complete application. The application must include:

1. An indication in the List of Included Programs, (p. 9) of the State's Consolidated State Application that the SEA includes "Section 6112, Enhanced Assessment Instruments" as a program included in its Consolidated State Application. For an application from a consortium of States, this indication must be included in the Consolidated State Application of the SEA that will serve as fiscal agent. If a State did not so indicate when it submitted its Consolidated Application June 12, 2002, but has now decided to apply for funding under Section 6112, then an amended List of Included Programs for its State Consolidated Application must be submitted with the application for Section 6112 funds. Inclusion of Section 6112 in this checklist indicates that the state agrees that the assurances made for the Consolidated State Application cover its activity under Section 6112.

2. Use the standard cover sheet (Form ED424, available at:

http://wdcrobis08.ed.gov/doc_img/ed424.doc) or a page that provides the following identifying information:

- a. The program name and CFDA Number,
 - b. The name(s) of the applicant agency(ies),
 - c. The name of the agency that will serve as fiscal agent,
 - d. The DUNS number for the agency that will serve as fiscal agent,
 - e. The TIN for the agency that will serve as fiscal agent,
 - f. A descriptive title for the project,
 - g. The name and contact information for the project director, and
 - h. The name, contact information, and signature of the responsible official for the agency that serves as fiscal agent.
3. A one-page abstract that gives an overview of the proposed project; its goals, purposes, and scope; its relationship, if any, to particular states' assessment systems; and any special features.
4. A program narrative that
 - a. Identifies which of the four absolute priorities is (are) met by the proposed project and describes how the project will meet such requirement(s) through clearly stated project objectives and relevant performance measures;
 - b. If applicable, describes how the proposed project meets one or more of the competitive preferences;
 - c. Addresses each of the selection criteria; and
 - d. Is limited to no more than 40 pages using the following standards:
 - 1) Each "page" is 8.5" x 11" (on one side only) with one-inch margins (top, bottom, and sides)

2) Double space (no more than 3 lines per vertical inch) and use a font no smaller than 10 point for all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, and captions as well as all text in charts, tables figures, and graphs.

3) Your cover sheet, budget section (chart and narrative), assurances and certifications, response regarding research activities involving human subjects, GEPA 427 response, one-page abstract, personnel resumes, and letters of support are not included in the page limit; however, your responses to 4(a) – 4(c) must be included within the page limit.

Our reviewers will not read any pages of your application that –

(a) Exceed the page limit if you apply these standards; or

(b) Exceed the equivalent of the page limit if you apply other standards.

5. A statement of whether any research activities involving human subjects are planned at any time during the proposed project period. Answer clearly “yes” or “no.” If your answer is “yes,” provide one of the following and the required accompanying narrative:

a. Exemption number(s); or

b. Assurance of compliance number, IRB approval date, and whether IRB conducted a full or expedited review. If your project will include research activities involving human subjects and has any activities that do not meet the exemption criteria, but you do not have an assurance of compliance, then so state. In this case, the applicant organization, by signature on the application is declaring that it will comply with 34 CFR 97 within 30 days after a specific formal request from the designated ED official for the assurances and IRB certifications.

For an explanation of the required documentation for item 5, see the discussion that begins on the second page of instructions for Form 424, which is found at <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/ed424.pdf>. Do not use form 424, but base your response to item 5 above on the information in the instructions for this form.

For further information about the regulations governing research involving human subjects, see <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/humansub.html>

6. A description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted programs for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs, as required by GEPA 427. [See “Notice to All Applicants” found at: http://wdcrobiis08.ed.gov/doc_img/sec427ofgepa.doc

7. Budget information, using form ED-524. Attach the required budget narrative. A fillable form is available at: <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/ed524frm.doc> and the instructions are at <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/ed524ins.pdf>

Selection Criteria

The Secretary will use the following selection criteria to evaluate applications under this competition. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses with the criterion. The maximum score for all selection criteria is 100 points. The criteria are as follows:

1. Need (10 points)
 - a. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project.
 - b. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - i. The magnitude and severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.
 - ii. The extent to which the proposed project will provide services or otherwise address the needs of students at risk of educational failure.
 - iii. The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.
2. Scope (10 points)
 - a. The Secretary considers the scope of the proposed project.
 - b. In determining the scope of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - i. The extent to which the goals, objectives, and indicators to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.
 - ii. The extent to which the goals and objectives are sufficiently broad to be likely to result in significant change or improvement of one or more state assessment systems.
3. Significance (15 points)
 - a. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.
 - b. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - i. The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.
 - ii. The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.
 - iii. The extent to which the proposed project is likely to yield findings that may be utilized by other appropriate agencies and organizations.
 - iv. The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.
4. Quality of Project Design (30 points)
 - a. The Secretary considers the quality of the project design of the proposed project.
 - b. In determining the quality of the project design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - i. The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.
 - ii. The quality of the proposed demonstration design and procedures for documenting project activities and results.
 - iii. The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.

- iv. The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.
 - v. The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.
 - vi. The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach for meeting statutory purposes and requirements.
 - vii. The quality of the methodology to be employed by the proposed project.
5. Quality of the Management Plan (5 points)
- a. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.
 - b. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - i. The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks
 - ii. The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.
6. Quality of Project Personnel (10 points)
- a. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.
 - b. In determining the quality of the personnel who carry out the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.
 - c. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - i. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator
 - ii. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.
 - iii. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience of project consultants or subcontractors
7. Adequacy of Resources (10 points)
- a. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project.
 - b. In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - i. The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization
 - ii. The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.
 - iii. The extent to which the budget is adequate to support the proposed project.
8. Quality of Evaluation Plan (10 points)
- a. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation plan for the proposed

project.

b. In determining the quality of the evaluation plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- i. The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.
- ii. The extent to which the methods of evaluation are appropriate to the context within which the project operates.
- iii. The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.
- iv. The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other situations.

GRANT APPLICATION RECEIPT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

(If you send your application by mail or if you or your courier deliver it by hand, the Application Control Center will mail a Grant Application Receipt Acknowledgement to you.) If you fail to receive the notification of application receipt within fifteen (15) days from the closing date call:

**U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
(202) 708-9493**

(If your application is late, we will notify you that we will not consider the application.)

GRANT AND CONTRACT FUNDING INFORMATION

The Department of Education provides information about grant and contract opportunities electronically in several ways:

ED Internet Home Page	http://www.ed.gov/
OCFO Web Page Internet	http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCFO/grants.html
OCFO Contracts Page	http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCFO/contracts.html

12/01